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III.—MODE AND TENSE IN THE SUBJUNCTIVE 'COMPARATIVE CLAUSE' IN LATIN.

In modern languages the clause of imaginative comparison ('as if') ordinarily takes the form of a condition contrary to fact. What is the history of the Latin idiom, by which a similar clause, introduced by *quasi*, *tamquam si*, *ut si* and the like took, except in connection with a past main verb, the present and perfect of the subjunctive?

The explanation generally given is that the Romans conceived the clause as a future condition. A clear statement of this view is to be seen in Allen and Greenough's Grammar, §312, rem.

"Thus the second example above" (viz. *tamquam si claudus sim*, Plaut. As. 419) "is translated *just as if I were lame*—as if it were a present condition contrary to fact; but it really means *just as* [it would be] *if I should at some future time be lame*, and so is a less vivid future condition requiring the present subjunctive. Similarly *quasi honeste vixerint*" (in *ita hos [honores] petunt, quasi honeste vixerint*), "*as if they had lived honorably*, is really as [they would do in the future] *if they should have lived honorably*, and so requires the perfect subjunctive."

Some countenance for such a view may perhaps be found in occasional sentences like the following: He doth nothing but frown, as one who should say "An you will not have me, choose." Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, i. 2; Alius accepit fastidiose, tamquam qui dicat "non quidem mihi opus est, sed quia tam valde vis, faciam tibi mei potestatem." Sen. Ben. 2, 24, 3. Still it is difficult to believe that any language that began by conceiving the comparative clause as a true condition should have ended in any other way than by treating it, reasonable exceptions like the above of course apart, as a condition contrary to fact. The regular type in English is seen in the following: Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort, As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit That could be moved to smile at anything. Shakespeare, Jul. Caes. i. 2. And in nearly every case that can be found, we are obliged to translate the Latin comparative clause by the same idiom. Even in default of any better explanation, then, the received one is unsatisfactory.

One necessary assumption that is involved in it is, however, of value. It is evident that, in many of the cases actually occurring, the Romans could not have had a true future condition in mind, *e. g.* in a passage in Plin. Ep. 4, 10, 2. Sabina has left an imperfect will. Pliny consults the lawyers, who agree that upon the point in question it is not binding; and then he writes as follows: "But this seems to me a clear oversight on Sabina's part, and I therefore think we ought to carry out what she believed she had written down, just as if she had written it." Now Sabina is dead, and therefore *quasi scripserit Sabina* cannot mean *just as if she should hereafter write it*. The usage, if beginning in the way suggested, must have lost its original meaning early, and become a stereotyped formula. I speak of this for the reason that my own suggestion will involve a similar conception of the stereotyping of a form that once had a full meaning, and I am glad to have warrant for the reasonableness of such a view in the generally received explanation of the construction under examination.

A conceivable second theory, which perhaps has not been suggested in print, is as follows:

The earliest forms for the conclusion contrary to fact may have been, indeed doubtless were, the present and perfect subjunctive. There are still abundant remains of the idiom in Plautus and Terence, and elsewhere. May not the comparative clause have been in the beginning a true condition contrary to fact?

I think not. For, if the Romans so conceived of it, then, when the use of the imperfect and pluperfect to express the idea of contrariety to fact came in, these conditions would have been sure to share the fate of other conditions of the same kind, and we should find the imperfect and pluperfect used in Ciceronian Latin to the exclusion of the present and perfect.

The true explanation, as one can see in advance, should satisfy two demands. The starting-point which it must find for the construction must not be far removed from the starting-point of the subjunctive condition; for a relationship *in some degree* between the clauses *tamquam si*, etc. and the clauses after the simple *si* seems highly probable. On the other hand, the beginnings of the two constructions must not be absolutely identical. *Some separative distinction of conception is indicated by the differing subsequent fates of the tenses*. What starting-point, that will satisfy both conditions, can be proposed for the comparative clause?

So far as I know, the Latin language itself affords no hint, except the probably illusory one already rejected. In such a

case there is but one possible resort, namely, to a comparison of the Latin with one or many of the closely related languages. Let us try Greek, if haply it may serve us.

Translated into Greek, *tamquam si* would be $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \epsilon\iota$. Now this is one of the phrases that introduce the Homeric simile. A certain resemblance is at once obvious. The Homeric simile, then, may be worth looking into.

For the complete and formal clause, the introductory phrases are $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$, $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \delta\tau\epsilon$ and $\acute{\omega}\pi\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$, and $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \epsilon\iota$; but substantially similar forms of expression are to be seen in relative clauses after antecedents depending upon adjectives and verbs of likening. And with these various forms are also clearly to be reckoned the relative clause attached to a simile.

The mode, in all these clauses except such as are introduced by $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \epsilon\iota$, is sometimes the indicative, sometimes the subjunctive. With $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$, the indicative is a little more frequent than the subjunctive; with $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \delta\tau\epsilon$ and $\acute{\omega}\pi\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$ the subjunctive is much more frequent than the indicative, though there are many examples of both.¹

¹ The figures that follow have been made up from the examples as given in Ebeling's Lexicon. But, unlike Ebeling, I have reckoned forms in $-\epsilon\tau\omicron\nu$, $-\acute{\omega}\nu\tau\alpha\iota$, $-\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha\iota$ and $-\acute{\omega}\varsigma\iota$ as indeterminate; and I have even been obliged to take the same view, except in one place, of forms in $-\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$, in deference to $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ in O 381 (which, in the simile, must be aorist subjunctive, not future indicative) and $\sigma\tau\acute{\rho}\epsilon\phi\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ in M 42 (which, without the possibility of anacoluthon, follows $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \delta' \acute{\upsilon}\tau' \acute{\alpha}\nu$). I further differ from Ebeling in regarding X 262 as of a different nature from the simile. (The formula for this example would be 'A is as true as B is true,' which is not the formula for a simile.)

I count, then, as follows:

After $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \delta\acute{\epsilon}$, indicatives 13, subjunctives 7 (all without $\acute{\alpha}\nu$ or $\kappa\epsilon$), indeterminate forms 4.

After $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \tau\epsilon$, indicatives 10 (reading $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\kappa\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ in Δ 433), subjunctives 11 (reading $\delta\rho\acute{\omega}\rho\eta$, after Bekker, in II 633), and 1 indeterminate form.

After $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma \tau\epsilon$, indicatives 2.

After $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \delta\tau\epsilon$, indicatives 19, subjunctives (counting $-\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ in M 41 as subjunctive, on account of the presence of $\acute{\alpha}\nu$) 45 (of which 12 have $\acute{\alpha}\nu$ or $\kappa\epsilon$), indeterminate forms 10. To this count should be added 1 mysterious optative (ι 384), and 1 indicative with $\acute{\alpha}\nu$ (κ 410), generally explained by editors as due to anacoluthon.

After $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\omega}\pi\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$, indicative 1, subjunctives 4 (all without $\acute{\alpha}\nu$ or $\kappa\epsilon$).

The summary for determinate forms would be as follows: after $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ without temporal conjunction, 25 indicatives and 18 subjunctives; after $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ with temporal conjunctions, 20 indicatives and 49 subjunctives.

This indicative (except in one instance to be discussed later) is of course to be regarded as citing an often-recurring and familiar fact. How is the subjunctive to be regarded, and how the optative, which appears alongside of the subjunctive in the clauses with *ὥς εἰ*?

An exhibit of examples is necessary. In the case of the *ὥς εἰ* clause, I give all that occur in the Homeric poems (see Ebeling's *Lexicon*). In the case of the other clauses, one or two instances for each will suffice.

With *ὥς δέ*, *ὥς τε*, *ὥς δ' ὅτε*, etc.:

ὥς δ' ἄνεμος ζαῆς ἥϊων θημῶνα τινάξει

. . . .

ὥς τῆς δούρατα μακρὰ διεσκέδασ'. ε 368.

ὥς δέ γυνή κλαίῃσι φίλον πόσιν ἀμφιπεσούσα,

ὅς τε εἴης πρόσθεν πόλιος λαῶν τε πέσῃσιν

. . . .

ὥς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐλεεινὸν ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυον εἴβεν. θ 523.

ὁ δ' αὖτ' ἔπεισεν μελίη ὥς,

ἦ τ' ὄρεος κορυφῇ ἔκαθεν περιφαινομένοιο

χαλκῷ ταμνομένη τέρενα χθονὶ φύλλα πελάσση. Ν 178.

δαίε οἱ ἐκ κόρυθός τε καὶ ἀσπίδος ἀκάματον πῦρ,

ἀστέρ' ὀπωρινῷ ἐναλίγκιον, ὅς τε μάλιστα

λαμπρὸν παμφαίνῃσι λελουμένος Ὠκεανοῖο. Ε 4.

οὐ γάρ σ' οὐδὲ, ξεῖνε, δαήμονι φωτὶ εἴσκω

ἄθλων, οἷά τε πολλὰ μετ' ἀνθρώποισι πέλονται,

ἀλλὰ τῷ, ὅς θ' ἅμα νηὶ πολυκλήιδι θαμίζων,

ἄρχος ναυτῶν οἷ τε πρηκτῆρες ἔασιν,

φόρτου τε μνήμων καὶ ἐπίσκοπος ἦσιν ὁδαίων. θ 159.

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ὀπωρινὸς βορέης φορέῃσιν ἀκάνθας

ἅμ πεδίον, πυκινὰ δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλησιν ἔχονται,

ὥς τὴν ἅμ πελαγὸς ἄνεμοι φέρον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. ε 328.

With *ὥς εἰ*:

Subjunctive:

(1) *καὶ μ' ἐφίλησ' ὥς εἴτε πατήρ ὃν παῖδα φιλήσῃ.* Ι 481.

Optative after secondary tenses:

(2) *οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἴσαν ὥς εἴτε πυρὶ χθὼν πᾶσα νέμοιτο.* Β 780.

- (3) Αἶαν διογενὲς Τελαμώνιε, κοίρανε λαῶν,
ἀμφί μ' Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονος ἵκετ' ἀντή,
τῷ ἱκέλῃ, ὥς εἴ ἐ βιψάτο μῦνον ἔοντα
Τρώες. Δ 465.
- (4) τῷ δὲ μάλιστ' ἄρ' ἔην ἐναλίκιον, ὥς εἰ ἅπασα
Ἰλιος ὀφρυνέεσσα πυρὶ σμύχοιτο κατ' ἄκρης. Χ 410.
- (5) αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
ἄψ' ἐπέθηχ', ὥς εἴ τε φαρέτρῃ πῶμ' ἐπιθείη. ι 313.
- (6) δόκησε δ' ἄρα σφίσι θυμός
ὥς ἔμεν, ὥς εἰ πατρίδ' ἰκοίατο. κ 415.
- (7) σοὶ μὲν νοστήσαντι, διοτρεφές, ὥς ἐχάρμεν,
ὥς εἴ τ' εἰς Ἰθάκην ἀφικοίμεθα. κ 419.
- (8) βῆ δ' ἵμεν αἰτήσων ἐνδέξια φῶτα ἔκαστον,
πάντοσε χεῖρ' ὀρέγων, ὥς εἰ πτωχὸς πάλαι εἴη. ρ 365.
- (9) διέτριβε κέλευθα
τοῖα πέλωρ' ὥς εἴ τις ἀραιῇσι δρυσὶ βάινοι. H. Merc. 348.

Optative after a primary tense:

- (10) εἰ μὲν δὴ ἀντίβιον σὺν τεύχεσι πεيرهθείης,
οὐκ ἂν τοι χραίσμῃσι βιὸς καὶ ταρφέες ἰοί·
νῦν δέ μ' ἐπιγράψας ταρσὸν ποδὸς εὐχεται αὐτῶς.
οὐκ ἀλέγω, ὥς εἴ με γυνὴ βάλῃ ἢ πάϊς ἄφρων. Δ 389.
(ap. Suid. βάλῃ)

Indicative:

- (11) λαοὶ ἔπονθ', ὥς εἴ τε μετὰ κτίλον ἔσπετο μῆλα. Ν 492.

If, now, we were to study the *ὥς εἰ* constructions by themselves alone, we might, with no forcing, interpret number (10) as Professor Greenough's interpretation conceives the Latin comparative clauses, as follows: I care no more than (I should care) if a woman were to strike me, or a senseless boy. And this conception is made the more natural by the fact that fighting in abundance is yet to come.¹ Example (9) might be interpreted as a similar

¹ It is of course possible that in *οὐκ ἀλέγω*, directly after the statement "you boast that you have hit the sole of my foot," the real feeling is "it hurt me no more than if . . .," so that the case would only be one of an optative standing after a past tense as the representative of a subjunctive. But the other interpretation seems the more natural. As for a possible claim that all these optatives are in some way examples of the old construction in the condition and conclusion contrary to fact, it must at once be disallowed on the strength of the aorist in (5); for only the present is used in the optative condition contrary to fact in present time (see Goodwin, Moods and Tenses, §438).

conception transferred to a past point of view. But we could less easily, and hardly, as it seems to me, with satisfaction to our sense for probabilities, interpret the other optative clauses as future, as follows: (2) "and, they marched as (they would march at some later time) if the whole earth should be consumed with fire,"—or, in easier phrase, "as if the whole earth were to be consumed with fire"; (3) "the shout of Odysseus came to me just now as if the Trojans were to overmaster him, alone among them"; (5) "and he put the huge door-stone back as if he were to put the lid upon a quiver"; (8) "and he set out to ask of each man, stretching out his hand on every side, as if he should sometime be a beggar of long standing." And even if these interpretations, so at variance with the Homeric directness and simplicity of conception, were to be accepted, it seems hopeless to attempt to understand (1) as meaning "he loved me as if a father shall love a son."

Apart from individual difficulties in this or that $\omega\varsigma \epsilon\iota$ clause, however, it is clear that sound method requires that these clauses be studied in connection with the clauses with $\omega\varsigma$, $\omega\varsigma \beta\tau\epsilon$ and the like above. Number 1 is not to be severed from such clauses as the second with $\omega\varsigma$, and yet it evidently is not to be severed from its comrades with $\omega\varsigma \epsilon\iota$.

The true explanation seems to be that the subjunctive in this idiom is the expression of a postulate of the will. By an act of the commanding imagination a case is summoned, for the sake of a comparison to be made, before the fancy of the speaker and hearer (Delbrück, *Syntaktische Forschungen*, I, pp. 65 and 161). The feeling may be illustrated by an English paraphrase, *e. g.*, for the first case with $\omega\varsigma$:

Let a gust of wind toss a dry heap of corn: just in that way were the long timbers scattered.

For the second example with $\omega\varsigma$:

Let a man fall fighting for his city and people, and let his wife throw herself upon him and bewail him: so pitifully did Odysseus weep.

For the less formal example E 4:

Picture the star of summer glittering above all others after bathing in the ocean stream: flame like this did she kindle from his helmet and shield.

As for the optatives with $\omega\varsigma \epsilon\iota$, they seem to me, with the exception of (9) and (10) (which will be taken up later) to be representatives of the subjunctive after a secondary tense. This

view is made the more probable by the fact that 1 actually presents us with a case of a secondary tense with an original subjunctive retained after it.

Professor Goodwin, *Moods and Tenses*, §545, explains the matter somewhat differently, regarding subjunctive examples with $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ ὅτε and $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ ὁπότε as expressing a general condition, and the examples with $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ as modelled upon these.¹ The difference between this view and Professor Delbrück's is much smaller than might at first thought appear. The general condition in Greek and Sanskrit is itself, in all probability, the expression of an imaginative postulate of the will. The feeling might be paraphrased by the English *let A happen, and B is always found to go with it*. By an act of the commanding imagination, a case is summoned before the fancy of the speaker and hearer. But this is precisely the description which I gave above of the office of the subjunctive in the simile. The difference, then, is not in the nature of the act of the imagination, but in the use made of the imagined case after it is brought upon the scene. In the simile, it is wanted for the sake of a comparison which is to be made; in the general condition, for the sake of a general statement. I should differ from Professor Goodwin, then, only in regarding the two constructions as proceeding from the same starting-point, rather than as starting one from the other. But I should at once (and this is an important part of my own view) concede that the identity in form between the $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ ὅτε clause and the general condition must have led to more or less confusion² in the Greek feeling with regard to their relations.

In just the same way I believe that the superficial resemblance between the $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ εἰ clause and the true condition led to an occasional treatment of the former as if it were the latter. This appears as early as Homer. In example (10) the mode probably expresses a less vivid future condition, as in the case of the sentences from Shakespeare and Seneca cited above, and in the following, from Xen. Symp. 4, 37: $\delta\mu\omicron\iota\alpha\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho\ \mu\omicron\iota\ \delta\omicron\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\epsilon\upsilon$

¹ Monro's *Homeric Grammar*, §285, 3 (a) places the construction with $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ under the head of an 'unconditional expression of will.' I should judge Mr. Monro's conception of the $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ ὅτε construction to be the same, §289 (2) (a); but it should be added that he seems (see §318 of the new edition) to incline toward the view that the 'quasi-imperative' use of the subjunctive is younger than the 'quasi-future' use, and a derivative of it.

² But not to complete confusion; for the indicative after $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ ὅτε and ὁπότε is much more frequent than in any sure form of the general condition.

ὥσπερ εἴ τις πολλὰ ἔχων καὶ πολλὰ ἐσθίων μηδέποτε ἐμπίπλαιο. Such a conception is especially reasonable where the indefinite pronoun is used, and in example (9), for this reason, the mode might well have been the same, even if the main verb had been in the present.

So much for the drift of the construction in the direction of a future condition. For the drift in the opposite direction, namely, that of the conception of the clause as a condition contrary to fact, an example is to be found as early as Homer, viz. in (11) above. The same thing appears in Aesch. Ag. 1201 (θανυμάζω δέ σου, πόντον πέραν τραφεῖσαν ἀλλόθρον πόλιν κυρεῖν λέγουσαν ὥσπερ εἰ παρυστάτεις), and in the very common clauses introduced by ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ.

On the Latin side, such a distinction as is made in Greek by using the optative in place of the subjunctive cannot, of course, be detected in the form of the verb, but may occasionally be surmised from the general nature of the thought, as in Quintil. 12, 5, 2 (where the second person expresses the same idea as the indefinite pronoun in the sentence cited above from Xenophon): nam ut abominanda sunt contraria his vitia confidentiae, temeritatis, improbitatis, arrogantiae, ita citra constantiam, fiduciam, fortitudinem nihil ars, nihil studium, nihil profectus ipse profuerit: ut si des arma timidis et imbellibus. The treatment of the clause as a condition contrary to fact, on the other hand, appears in many passages, e. g. Ter. Phorm. 382 (proinde expiscare quasi non nosset); Cic. Sull. 18, 51; Mur. 4, 10; Fin. 4, 12, 31; Fam. 2, 14, 1; 3, 5, 4; 13, 43, 2; Att. 3, 13, 1; Liv. 42, 13, 1; Tac. Ann. 3, 50; Gellius in the old formula for the adrogatio, 5, 19, 9; Servius ad Verg. Ecl. 8, 10; Pompeius, p. 251, 15 Keil (cf. the present in the same phrase in p. 255, 12).

It still remains to point out a certain variation of meaning in the Greek similes, and the position of the Latin comparative clause on this point. The clause with ὥς or ὥς ὅτε brings before the imagination a picture corresponding to an often observed fact. The clause with ὥς εἰ either does this, as in the case of example (1), or it brings before the imagination an act or state conceived only for the individual instance, as in the case of the remaining examples, (2) to (10). With this latter function of the ὥς εἰ clause the function of the Latin comparative clause is absolutely identical. In example (8), for instance, ὥς εἰ πτωχὸς πάλαι εἴη would correspond exactly, not only in meaning, but in grammatical expression, to a *tamquam si iam pridem mendicus esset*, after a past tense like βῆ.

I have now—to recapitulate—touched upon three points which seem to me significant: the exact parallelism in expression, so far as the introductory phrases are concerned, between the Latin comparative clause with *tamquam si* and the like and one form of the Homeric simile; the exact parallelism in meaning between the Latin comparative clause and this same form of the Homeric simile in nine out of the ten cases that occur; and, lastly, the exact parallelism of the two idioms in their abnormal variations. But this form of the Greek simile, when studied as a part of a group of clearly related constructions, appears to be the product of the exercise of the commanding imagination in setting up a picture before the mind. Under this light, I think it probable that we ought to regard the original Latin comparative clause, not as a future condition, nor as a condition contrary to fact, but as a postulate of the imagination not fixed anywhere in time. The original meaning would then have been “imagine things to be so and so; in just the same way . . .” The fact that things *are* not as imagined is of no consequence. The speaker’s conception no more concerns itself with that side of the matter than it does with the same side in the subjunctive concession. When a man says *ita sit: tamen . . .*, or *ita fuerit: tamen . . .*, the thing which he for the moment imaginatively posits is, as he believes, contrary to fact, but that does not hinder him from wholly neglecting this aspect of the matter. “Fancy it as you will,” says he, “yet, whether it is so or not . . .” In just the same way, the earliest meaning of such a sentence as *tamquam si claudus sim, cum fustist ambulandum* may perfectly well have been *fancy me a cripple: that’s the way I have to go around, always with a stick in my hand*.

Beginning thus, the idiom, according to my conception of its history, became stereotyped. Yet its outward identity with the conditional clause led to an occasional treatment of it as such; in which case it of course appeared in the form of a condition contrary to fact, according to the same logic that rules the corresponding idiom in modern languages.

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